



Jack and Rochelle: A Holocaust Story of Love and Resistance

By Jack Sutin, Rochelle Sutin



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Jack and Rochelle Sutin crossed paths in the winter of 1942-43, when, after separate escapes from Nazi ghetto labor camps, they discovered each other in the wooded lands of Poland. The forest where they remained in hiding was a place where many Jews and Russians, the so-called partisans, had fled to in an effort to escape Nazi persecution.

Despite their bleak surroundings—inhuman living conditions and ever-present danger—Jack and Rochelle began a careful courtship that flourished into a deepening love. With a new determination and a thirst for revenge, Jack led partisan raids on nearby Polish farms that were occupied by Nazi sympathizers. Thus was their resistance waged, often in ignorance of what atrocities were being committed in the rest of Europe. Cut off from the outside world, the partisans' survival depended on desperate, makeshift warfare strategies. Maintained by a blind faith and their deep love for one another, Jack and Rochelle survived circumstances that had never before been imposed on a people.

Today, Jack and Rochelle are part of a small group of resistance fighters whose testimony offers all readers and students a unique perspective on this terrible episode of human history. Lawrence Sutin herein presents his parents' story in their own words, stories that he has heard throughout his life. In a thoughtful afterward, he reflects on his experiences as a child of Holocaust survivors.

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- Rank: #2769127 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Graywolf Press
- Published on: 1996-03-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: .71" h x 5.54" w x 8.42" l,
- Binding: Paperback
- 225 pages



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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Memoir of two Polish Jews who fell in love while hiding out from the Nazis during WW II.

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From [Booklist](#)

Jack and Rochelle Sutin take turns narrating their harrowing story of the Holocaust, edited by their son, Larry, the author of *Divine Invasions: The Life of Philip K. Dick*. The couple first met briefly at a school dance in Stolpce, Poland, and then again in the winter of 1942^43 in a woods after making separate escapes from Nazi ghetto labor camps. In the woods they joined a Jewish partisan group, lived in inhuman conditions, and fell in love. German troops, Polish police, and Russian partisans--who hated the Jews--all made their survival arduous. In the summer of 1943, they joined a much larger partisan group (about 300 fellow Jews), and that August the Germans sent 20,000 troops into the forest to put down the resistance. Jack and Rochelle escaped into the swamps and were eventually liberated by Russian forces. The story has a happy ending; the Sutins were married and in 1949 emigrated to the U.S. *George Cohen*

Review

"Told by a husband and wife who became lovers while living as partisans in the Nalibocka Forest, [this] is a memoir in which there is no sentimentalizing, and no striking of heroic poses even when they might be justified . . . Jack and Rochelle remained with the [partisan] group until the Russian liberation in 1944. . . . Their son, Lawrence Sutin, who has contributed a cogent and moving afterword on the subject of survivors' children, has assembled his parents' story from numerous interviews, and he tells us that they checked every word [and] determined that [*Jack and Rochelle* is] an accurate account of their lives . . . Faithful inclusiveness, combined with a depth of feeling never minimized and never paraded, makes this strong, honest, affecting book a valuable addition to Holocaust literature."—*The New York Times Book Review*

"A story of heroism and of touching romance in a time of fear and danger . . . It offers a unique perspective on the Holocaust, one that captures its horror without missing the central characters' strength, courage, and passion."—*USA Today*

"Lawrence Sutin's *Jack and Rochelle* is a powerful and moving account of how his parents fell in love in the midst of their struggle to survive the Holocaust as part of a band of partisans in the forests of Poland . . . *Jack and Rochelle* tells a beautiful and compelling personal story in a way that gives us a much deeper appreciation of the complexities faced by Jews trying to navigate among German, Polish, and Russian anti-Semites."—*Michael Lerner, Tikkun*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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